

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5644
ANSWERED ON:16.05.2007
REVIEW OF PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM
Bose Shri Subrata

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the meetings of the various Ministries called by the Union Government during the year 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 for the reviewing the Panchayati Raj system alongwith the dates of these meetings;
- (b) the details of the decisions taken in these meetings;
- (c) the details of the decisions out of the above which could not be implemented; and
- (d) the details of assessment of the success of the Panchayati Raj in West Bengal?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) and (b): After the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was set up, a Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in charge of rural development and Panchayati Raj on "Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj" was organized in New Delhi on 29-30 June 2004, jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Issues relating to effective implementation of Part IX and IX A of the Constitution on Panchayati Raj were tabled as the agenda for discussions by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. In this Conference, a decision was taken to hold seven Round Table Conferences to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to emerge as institutions of self-government for the planning and implementation of programmes of economic development and social justice as envisioned in the Constitution.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table Meetings with the State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj between July, 2004 and December, 2004. A set of around 150 action points was evolved by consensus and adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur in December, 2004. Consultative mechanisms have been set up by the Government of India and State Governments to follow up the Round Table Conferences which comprise a Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and a Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and Panchayati Raj Secretaries under the Chairmanship of the Union Secretary (Panchayati Raj).

Details of the Round Table Conferences and other meetings of Ministry of Panchayati Raj with the Ministers for reviewing the Panchayati Raj System are as follows:

Meetings	Invitees	Date	Loca-	Details of decisions/ tion discussions in these meetings
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First Round	Ministers of Pancha-	24th and 25th	Kolkata	Effective devolution
Table	yati Raj of the Union	July, 2004		comprising functions,
	and State/ UTs.			functionaries and finances
				as well as Gram Sabhas

Second Round	Ministers of Panchaya-	28th and 29th	Mysore	Planning and implementation
Table	ti Raj of the Union	August, 2004		including the question of
	and State/ UTs.			parallel bodies, Rural
				Business Hubs

Third Round	Ministers of Panchaya-	23rd and 24th	Raipur	Reservations in Panchayati
Table	ti Raj of the Union	September, 2004		Raj comprising Scheduled
	and State/ UTs.			Tribes (including impleme-
				ntation of PESA), Scheduled
				Castes and Women.

Fourth Round Ministers of Panchaya- 7th and 8th Chan- Panchayati Raj in Union
Table ti Raj of the Union October, 2004 digarh Territories and Panchayati
and State/ UTs. Raj Jurisprudence

Fifth Round Ministers of Panchaya- 28th and 29th Sri- Annual Reports on the State
Table ti Raj of the Union October, 2004 nagar of the Panchayats (including
and State/ UTs preparation of a Devolution
Index)

Sixth Round Ministers of Panchaya- 27th and 28th Guwa- Panchayati Raj elections and
Table ti Raj of the Union November, 2004 hati audits
and State/ UTs

Seventh Round Ministers of Panchaya- 17th, 18th Jaipur Capacity building and training
Table ti Raj of the Union and 19th of Panchayati Raj Institutions,
and State/ UTs December, 2004 IT enabled e-Governance for
Panchayats

First Meeting Ministers of Panchaya- 5th and 6th Kochi, Progress on activity mapping
of Council of ti Raj of the Union August, 2005 Kerala was reviewed. A joint statement
Ministers of and State/ UTs of conclusion was signed at
Panchayati Raj the end of the meeting
regarding fixation of
milestones in activity mapping,
training programmes for
Panchayat representatives as
well as officials of line
departments to sensitize them
to the scope and implications
of devolution, creation of
Panchayat Sector in State
Budgets to operationalise the
transfer of schemes to
Panchayats by 2006-2007.

Second Meeting Ministers of Panchaya- 15th and 16th Bhuba- In this Meeting the main focus
of Council of ti Raj of the Union June, 2006 neswar was on Decentralised Planning.
Ministers of and State/ UTs. The participating Ministers
Panchayati Raj indicated the implementation
status in their respective
states on Activity Mapping,
Creation of Panchayat Sector
in State Budgets, fiscal
devolution and constitution
of District Planning
Committees.

Committee Chief Secretaries and 25TH April 2007 N.Delhi Detailed discussion was held
of Chief Secretary Panchayati on the BRGF guidelines and the
Secretaries & Raj of the States. Rural Business Hubs (RBH).
Secretaries of
Panchayati Raj
of states.

Empowered Sub- Chief Ministers and 12th January N.Delhi Activity Mapping, DPCs,
Committee of Ministers of state of 2007 Implementation of PESA
the National Panchayati Raj and BRGF.
Development
Council.

Central Experts in the field 5th February N.Delhi Discussion was on Activity
Advisory of Panchayati Raj. 2007. mapping and devolution of fund,
Committee function and functionaries.

(c): The performance across the States in taking appropriate measures for streamlining and empowering the Panchayati Raj Institutions for implementation of the decisions taken during these meetings has been uneven. The Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj in their second meeting at Bhubaneswar observed that in many states, the preliminary task of Activity Mapping across the three levels of Panchayats has been completed, however progress across States in the constitution of District Planning Committees has been uneven and somewhat slow. With a view to interacting with Panchayats and carrying out a review with authorities concerned of the progress in implementing the points for action mutually agreed to in the Round Tables, a process of visiting the States and UTs at the level of Union Minister for Panchayati Raj has been initiated. Eighteen States and three Union Territories have been covered so far, including Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Chhatisgarh, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Goa, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. Each visit is concluded with a Statement of Conclusions jointly signed with the Chief Minister of the State concerned, laying out the points of action on which the State would move to operationalise the recommendations of the Round Tables. Most of these action points revolve around follow up measures on activity mapping, matching transfer of funds and functionaries, creation of Panchayat sector in the State budget, constitution and operational guidelines for District Planning Committees within an agreed time frame.

(d): West Bengal completed Activity Mapping in 2005 and have also constituted the District Planning Committees in accordance with Article 243ZD of the Constitution. The State is generally recognized as being among the leading States in implementing Panchayati Raj, but, of course, there is always room for further improvement. West Bengal has had a continuous record of doing so since even before the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution were passed by Parliament in December, 1992. Evaluation of progress is at present being measured against the Joint Statement signed by CM, West Bengal and the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj in May 2005. More stringent, scientific and independent evaluation will be undertaken as soon as NCAER's Devolution Index is given final shape and arrangements being negotiated with the Institute of Rural Management at Anand (IRMA) are operationalised.